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# Farm Broadcasters Letter



United States Department of Agriculture    Office of Communications    Electronic Media Services    Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2634

October 29, 1993

*At an elementary school cafeteria in Washington, D.C., Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy announced the results of a school lunch study that shows virtually no school lunches conform to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Espy said the lesson is simple, we can't continue to deep fry our children's health. With Espy is Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy, chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry; and USDA Assistant Secretary Ellen Haas. USDA photo by Ken Hammond.*



**SCHOOL LUNCH REPORT CARD** -- A USDA report, "The School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study," reveals that school lunches exceed dietary guidelines for fat by more than 25 percent, saturated fat by 50 percent, and sodium by nearly 100 percent. The report surveyed 545 schools and interviewed 3,350 students attending the schools. Ellen Hass, USDA assistant secretary for Food and Consumer Services, says, "We must provide the leadership to meet our national responsibility to children. There is scientific consensus that diet is linked to health. Diets high in fat and sodium lead to chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease and stroke. And chronic disease often begins in childhood." **Contact: Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623.**

**MIDWEST FLOOD RESPONSE CENTER** -- USDA has established an "800" telephone number for agricultural producers impacted by midwest floods. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy, named by President Clinton as coordinator of long-term recovery efforts, says the toll-free service will quickly and efficiently make available information about assistance. Callers can talk weekdays with USDA program specialists from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. CT. After 3:00 p.m. questions can be left on an answering machine for later response. The toll-free number will serve producers in nine states: Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The number is: 1-800-880-4183. **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

**RETAIL FOOD PRICES** -- The lowest increase since 1967 was registered last year in retail food prices, 1.2 percent. It was less than half the 1991 price increase of 2.9 percent. Americans spent \$606 billion for food last year, and another \$87 billion for alcoholic beverages. Away-from-home meals and snacks captured 45 percent of the U.S. food dollar in 1992. The percentage of disposable personal income spent for food declined from 13.9 percent in 1970 to 11.5 percent in 1992. **Contact: Judith Putnam (202) 219-0870.**

**CHINA** -- Higher income growth in China and marketing reforms in the next decade will lead to a very different food consumption pattern in the year 2000 compared with the previous four decades. Rice consumption is projected to decline while consumption of other farm products is projected to increase sharply. China's transformation from a centrally planned to a more market-oriented economy will stimulate income growth, which will rapidly expand consumer demand for agricultural products. In the long term, China could be a major market for U.S. soybean and oilseed exports. China's corn exports are projected to decline sharply, offering an opportunity for the U.S. to increase its share of the East Asian corn market. **Contact: Francis Tuan (202) 219-0610.**

**FOOD CONSUMPTION TRENDS** -- Latest statistics show that Americans consumed less red meat and more poultry in 1992. However, red meat accounted for 60 percent of the total meat supply. Each American averaged 18 pounds less red meat, 26 pounds more poultry, and 3 pounds more fish than in 1970. Americans used less whole milk, animal fats and eggs in 1992 than in 1991. Consumption of yogurt increased to 4.3 pounds per person last year. Americans have been shifting their eating patterns away from animal products and toward crop products. Away-from-home meals and snacks increased to 45 percent of the U.S. food dollar. Food remains a bargain. The percentage of disposable personal income spent for food declined to 11.5 percent in 1992. **Contact: Judith Putnam (202) 219-0870.**

**GETTING MORE WITH LESS** -- Only a quarter of the usual dose of the herbicide bentazon is needed to control common cocklebur in soybeans when the soil between the bean rows is tilled. Researchers with USDA's Agricultural Research Service tilled twice between the rows after a single bentazon application of one-quarter pound per acre, killing 90 percent of the cocklebur. Usually a half-pound per acre is applied two times to reach that percentage. Farmers spend \$100 million annually to combat common cocklebur, a bushy, prickly invader that reduces soybean yields more than any other weed. **Contact: Douglas Buhler (612) 625-6719.**

**USDA PUBLICATIONS LIST** -- USDA has compiled a list of agricultural publications for farmers and consumers. "List of Available Publications of the United States Department of Agriculture," presents agricultural periodicals, subscriptions, and publications by subject matter that are available from the Superintendent of Documents. The booklet also lists publications available from the National Agricultural Library, the Consumer Information Center, and USDA along with order forms. To obtain a free copy write to Publications List, Room 507A, USDA, 14th & Independence Avenue Southwest, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300. **Contact: Delores Harris (202) 720-2914.**

**AEROBIC EXERCISE** -- A regular workout helps improve glucose tolerance in people who are at risk of developing diabetes, even if they don't lose weight. A recent USDA study of men and women over age 50 showed that exercise on a stationary bicycle at one-half their aerobic capacity for 4 days a week cleared 11 percent more glucose from their blood. The exercise improved the body's ability to respond to insulin so that glucose moves readily from the body into blood cells. The study shows that a regular workout tones more than just muscles. **Contact: Virginia Hughes (617) 556-3079.**

## FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

**AGRICULTURE USA #1899** -- Four former Secretaries of Agriculture voice their support for the North American Free Trade Agreement. **Brenda Curtis** talks with **Orville Freeman** (1961-1969), **Bob Bergland** (1977-1981), **John Block** (1981-1986), and **Clayton Yeutter** (1989-1991). (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

**CONSUMER TIME #1381** -- School breakfast program increasing; USDA's report card on school meals; Africanized honey bees on the move; cooking trends for meat products; wooly winter weather watchers. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

**AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1891** -- USDA News Highlights; rocky mountain alligators; prairie dog control; alternative to wheat; salty dilemma (Weekly reel of news features.)

**NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1644** -- Efficient parasite; plants call for help; successful weevils; mite might make it; herbicide sensor. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Tuesday, November 9, crop & weather update, U.S. crop production, world ag supply & demand; Wednesday, November 10, vegetable outlook, world grain production, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation; Monday, November 15, livestock & poultry. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.**  
*Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.*

## FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

**FEATURES** -- DeBoria Janifer reports on the Ag in the Classroom workshop. **Lynn Wyvill** reports on the Fungi Collection.

**ACTUALITIES** -- Secretary of Agriculture **Mike Espy** and assistant secretary **Ellen Haas** on nutrition in school meal programs; USDA deputy secretary **Richard Rominger** on NAFTA; USDA chief meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on weather and crop conditions; USDA economist **Janet Livezey** on the current rice outlook; USDA economist **Mark Ashe** on the oilseed outlook.

**UPCOMING FEATURES** -- DeBoria Janifer reports on coaxing genes.

**EVERY OTHER WEEK** -- Agriculture Update with anchors **Eric Parsons** and **Lori Spiczka**. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

*Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.*

## OFFMIKE

**TWO MILLION...**more hogs could be produced in northwest Missouri in the next two years, says **Jay Truitt** (KMZU/KAOL/KTRX, Carrollton, MO). Jay says the state has exempted three counties in the northwestern section of the state allowing publicly held corporations to farm. Major firms have announced plans to begin operations in the region. Waste management will likely be an important issue. Jay says that WHB in Kansas City has been added to the stations that his group programs. **Lynn Watts** has returned to the staff from WOC, Davenport, IA.

**ITS BEEN AN EXCELLENT YEAR...**for most Indiana producers, says **Dave Russell** (Tribune Radio Networks, Indianapolis). Soybean yields are hitting 47 bushels an acre. Recent rains have delayed harvest progress, but have provided time for equipment repairs.

**NAFTA...**is getting mixed support in the area, says **Kim Spiczka** (WYRQ, Little Falls, MN). Kim also says the 1993 crop disasters will take a toll in producers, many will go under.

### *Farm Broadcasters Letter*



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**\$300 MILLION LOSS...**could confront cotton producers in Mississippi, says **John Winfield** (Mississippi Network, Jacksonville). Army worms and terrible weather have decimated yields. Estimates indicate 160 pounds per acre below last year.

**WEATHER EXTREMES...**affected cotton development this year, says **Ben Oldag** (KPRC, Houston, TX). A very wet spring was followed by a summer-long drought. Yields are down. Some producers abandoned their fields. It is a major change from last year when the region produced its biggest cotton crop.

**WHEAT HAS BROKEN GROUND...**and is looking good, says **Hap Larson** (KBUF, Garden City, KS). Sorghum producers are waiting for a freeze to help in harvesting a good crop. Hap says he's redesigning programming, and the new version is scheduled for airing early next year.

**NAFB...**annual meeting in Kansas City, MO, November 10-14, 1993. See you there.

**VIC POWELL**   
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